

memorandum

DATE: October 4, 2010

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: **Environmental Clearance Memorandum**

TO: Jennifer Gumm
Project Manager – TPC-BELL-1

Proposed Action: East Omak Substation Fiber Project

Budget Information: Work Order #267987 and Task 01

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):

B1.15 Siting, construction, and operation of small-scale support buildings and support structures and/or small-scale modifications of existing buildings or structures within or contiguous to an already developed area. B4.7 Adding fiber optic cable to transmission structures or burying fiber optic cable in existing transmission line rights-of-way.

Location: Near the City of Omak, Okanogan County, Washington

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and Okanogan Public Utility District (PUD)

Description of the Proposed Action:

Okanogan PUD proposes to bring fiber into the control house of BPA's East Omak Substation (Substation) in Okanogan County, WA. The Substation parcel, owned in fee by BPA, is located along Copple Road. The Substation can be accessed from Highway 97, which is located approximately 1,000 feet to the east of the Substation.

The purpose of the East Omak Substation Fiber Project (Project) is to improve existing communications for Okanogan PUD and Douglas County PUD, who serves as Okanogan PUD's after hours dispatch. The current radio path is sent through several radio repeater stations to East Wenatchee. This system is old and difficult for Okanogan PUD to maintain. Currently Douglas PUD receives the radio signals and provides them to Okanogan PUD. Installation of fiber would enable Okanogan PUD to directly receive the data and share with Douglas PUD. This Project would also provide indication of three breakers at East Omak. The installation of fiber would enhance and support the operations of Okanogan PUD at East Omak Substation.

To install the fiber, the Okanogan PUD would string fiber onto their two existing transmission line structures that are located within the BPA-owned Substation parcel. To extend fiber to the Substation control house from the existing Okanogan PUD structures, Okanogan PUD would install two wood poles in a narrow strip of land, immediately east of the road that enters the Substation. The fiber would be attached to the existing Okanogan PUD transmission line

structures, then to the wood poles that would be installed for this Project. An aerial splice case would be installed on an existing single wood pole structure south of the corner structure. A fiber vault would be imbedded or partially buried in the ground at the base of the wood pole closest to the control house. From the vault to the control house, the fiber would be installed in one of two underground conduits. A ditch would be dug to lay the conduits. The conduits would be placed approximately 36 inches below grade on top of a gravel base.

Existing Environment - The two wood poles and vault would be installed in an undeveloped strip of land immediately adjacent and to the east of the gravel entry road into the Substation (Photo 1). The vegetation is mainly composed of native species, including sagebrush, bitterbrush, rabbitbrush, some bunchgrasses, and forbs, including phlox. Because percent aerial cover by vegetation only averages approximately 30%, much of the ground surface is visible. The substrate is a very loose sandy soil.



Photo 1. View from the Cobble Road entrance to the East Omak Substation, facing north; the area where fiber would be installed is the strip of vegetation on the right side of the photo, conduit would be installed under the gravel entry road into the small building (BPA control house) in the distance.

Surrounding land uses include businesses, homes, and undeveloped land. An engineering firm is located in a building immediately adjacent to the Project site. A quarry producing fill material and crushed rock and a construction company are located off Highway 97, near the Project site.

The wood poles would be installed within the native shrub community (Photo 2). Most of the conduit would lie under the gravel road leading into the substation, but a short section near the wood pole would be trenched within the native shrub community.



Photo 2. Within the East Omak Substation Parcel, facing south; work would be conducted in the narrow strip of shubby vegetation on the right side of the photograph and the conduit would be buried under the gravel road.

BPA investigated if there would be any adverse effects to resources within or near the Project site. The Project site is the narrow strip of land approximately 0.7 acre in size, where two wood poles, a fiber vault at base of one wood pole, and the underground conduits for fiber would be installed. The Project site is on the eastern edge of the Substation parcel owned by BPA.

Cultural Resources - Pursuant to its responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, BPA initiated consultation with the WA State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CCT) on March 25, 2010. BPA requested concurrence on the proposed undertaking and Area of Potential Effects (APE) and requested information on known cultural resources in the Project area. BPA received concurrence from the WA SHPO on March 30, 2010. The CCT did not provide any comments.

BPA contract archeologists conducted background research and field investigations to identify any cultural resources in the Project area. Background research was conducted on April 2, 2010 using Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (WA DAHP) records. Six cultural resource surveys conducted within one mile of the Project area provided information on known cultural sites within the Project area. No known cultural sites are located on the Project site. The East Omak Substation was built in 1982 and is not old enough to be considered as a historic property eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Two BPA contract archeologists conducted an intensive field survey of the entire Project site on May 18, 2010. No cultural material was found during visual survey of the surface and during subsurface excavations. Following the background research and field survey, a technical report was prepared and submitted to the WA SHPO and the CCT for review and comment. Based on the archaeological field survey results, BPA determined that no historic properties would be affected as a result of the Project. On June 7, 2010, the WA SHPO concurred with BPA's

Determination of No Historic Properties Affected. BPA did not receive any comments from the CCT.

T&E Species or Their Habitat – Pursuant to its responsibilities under federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), BPA considered whether the Project could affect species listed as federally endangered or threatened. The Okanogan County rare species list provided information on federally listed species that could potentially occur in the Project area.

The only ESA listed plant species on the Okanogan County list is Ute ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*), a threatened species. This species requires a wet environment with a high water table that persists into the growing season. The Project site does not have wetlands or waterways. Therefore there is no potential habitat for Ute ladies'-tresses on the Project site. The Project would have no effect on Ute ladies'-tresses.

One fish species, bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), is on the Okanogan County list as a federally threatened species. Because the closest waterway is approximately 600 feet from the Project site, the Project would have no effect on bull trout.

One federally endangered and four threatened animals are on the Okanogan County list. The federally endangered animal is gray wolf (*Canis lupis*). The federally threatened animals are Canada Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*), and northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*). The Project area is gridded with paved roads and the Project site is located within 1000 feet of Highway 97. Although development in the Project area is not dense, businesses, homes, a quarry, and agricultural uses are scattered throughout the surrounding area. There are some native shrub and herbaceous species on the Project site, but no trees or other large, dense areas of cover that would provide habitat for gray wolf, grizzly bear, Canada lynx, or spotted owl. Because the Project area does not provide potential habitat, the Project would have no effect on listed animal species with the potential to occur in Okanogan County.

Floodplains or Wetlands – The Project site is upland. There is no evidence of wetland hydrology or water features on the Project site. The closest waterway is located approximately 600 feet north of the Project site in Ross Canyon. Soils are sandy and well-drained and do not exhibit hydric soil characteristics. Vegetation is composed of upland species that grow in well-drained soil that are dry for much of the year. Because there is no evidence of wetland hydrology, dominance of hydrophytic plant species, and hydric soils on the Project site, it is an upland.

Findings: BPA has determined that the proposed action complies with Section 1021.410 and Appendix B of Subpart D of the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, July 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996). The proposed action does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal. The proposal is not connected [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a)(1)] to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a)(2)], and is not precluded by 40 C.F.R. 1506.1 or 10 C.F.R. 1021.211. Moreover, the proposed action would not (i) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health,

(ii) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities, (iii) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that pre-exist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases, or (iv) adversely affect environmentally sensitive resources.

/s/ Kimberly R. St.Hilaire

Kimberly R. St.Hilaire
Environmental Project Manager

Concur:

/s/ Katherine S. Pierce

Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: October 4, 2010

Attachment: Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: East Omak Substation Fiber Project

Work Order #: 267987

This project has been found to **not** adversely affect the following environmentally sensitive resources, laws, and regulations:

<u>Environmental Resources</u>	<u>No Adverse Effect</u>	<u>No Adverse Effect With Conditions</u>
1. Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. T & E Species, or their habitat(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Floodplains or wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Areas of special designation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Health & safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Prime agricultural lands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Special sources of water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Consistency with state and local laws and regulations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Pollution control at Federal facilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signed: Kimberly St.Hilaire

Date: October 4, 2010